(c) and (d) Various measures are being taken to substantially accelerated exploratory activities for enhancing domestic oil and gas production which include the following:

(i) increasing exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP): Under NELP, 110 exploration blocks have been awarded to National Oil Companies, foreign companies and private/joint venture companies through International Competitive Bidding. This includes 20 Exploration Blocks awarded in the fifth round of NELP. Another 55 blocks have now been offered under NELP-VI.

(ii) improving the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/!mproved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes-in particular. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,972 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields;

(iii) exploring new areas, especially in deep waters and difficult frontier areas, as also the deeper layers of already producing fields;

(iv) developing newly discovered fields speedily and stepping up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, and stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas;

(v) 26 contracts included 10 contracts under the recent third round have been signed so far for exploration of Coal Bed Methane (CBM);

(vi) Acquisition of overseas oil and gas reserves through equity or participating interest; and

(vii) With the delicensing of the refinery sector since June 1998, more petroleum infrastructure including domestic refineries have been set up in the country.

NELP-VI Bids

227. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangladesh has contested that 2 exploratory blocks offered by the Indian Government under NELP-Vl bids, lie in its territorial waters in the eastern offshore in Mahanadi-NEC basin;

(b) whether the bids for these two blocks have already been evaluated bytheDGH;and

(c) whether.India is likely to substantiate its claim on the blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Bangladesh Government had shown apprehension regarding two blocks namely D-22 and D-23 offered under the sixth round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (N.ELP-VI) pointing out that these two blocks encroach upon Bangladesh maritime areas. However, the blocks lie within the Exclusive Economic Zone of India. The Government has already awarded these blocks in February, 2007 and the Production Sharing Contracts are to be signed on 2nd March, 2007 between Government and awardee company.

Central Sales Tax on petrol

228. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to bring petrol, diesel and aviation fuel under the Central Sales Tax Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the impact this will have on State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Petrol, diesel and aviation fuel (for domestic airline) are already under the Central Sales Tax Act for their inter-state movement. At present they are not 'declared goods' under the Central Sales Tax Act and consequently the sales tax/VAT rates on these products differ from State to State.

LPG requirement in the country

229. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total approximate requirement of LPG for commercial and domestic use during the current year in the country;

(b) whether LPG produced through indigenous sources is insufficient to meet the requirement of the country and it is being imported also from overseas; and